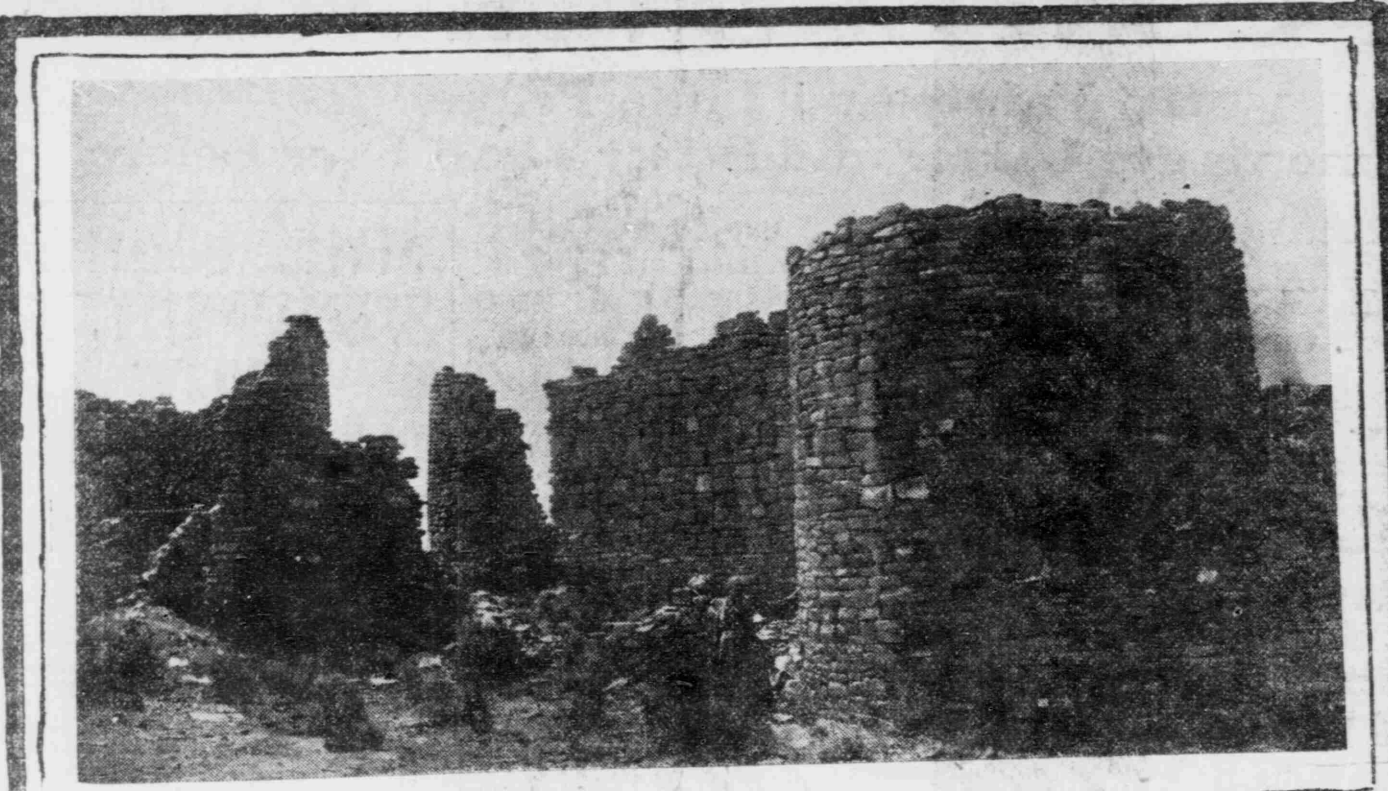


SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 1905

Into the Wilds of the Unknown San Juan Country



REAR VIEW OF
CASTLE IN
Ruin Canyon
Utah.

H. L. A. Culmer, the Artist, and S. T. Whitaker, Photographer, Start on Their Trip of Exploration to a Land Concerning Which There is Much Mystery—Vast Mineral Deposits May Be Discovered—Commercial Club Back of the Enterprise.

EXPLORATIONS into the mysteries of the San Juan country in Utah, bounded within the Elk mountains on the east and the angle formed by the San Juan river, are to be made by H. L. A. Culmer, the artist, and Samuel T. Whitaker under the direction of the Commercial club. These explorers left yesterday for Bluff city, San Juan county, where they will obtain a month's provisions and several guides to assist them in their expedition. A base of supplies will be established at the head of some stream in the Elk mountains, and from that point they intend to work their way into the unknown country.

No living creatures, save coyotes and hounds make their home in this desolate country. Even the scientist has failed to penetrate into the depths of this region, and the geological age of the rocks has been left undetermined. The government surveying and exploration parties have spent years battling with the cataracts in their descent down the Colorado and San Juan rivers. They succeeded in penetrating into sections of the country and the tributaries of the San Juan. There they found ruins of the habitations of vanished races in desolate and barren places on ledges and in caves, whose past history is unknown. The story of the life the aborigines lived is only known in told by these ruins, by their bones, their pottery, their rude weapons, tools and weapons. Hieroglyphics and inscriptions are scratched on the cliffs, but the translation has never been rendered.

Canyons Never Hitherto Explored.

The side canyons, extending far into this unknown region, which always present a perpendicular face thousands of feet in depth, have never been explored. The cliffs and gorges seem almost unapproachable. No streams flow from this region and the scarcity of water adds to the difficulty of exploration. What records of the cliff dwellers are engulged in this territory are unknown. It is evident that they built their homes and fortifications in this region as they did in the surrounding valleys and cliffs. Wild rumors come from the cowboys who have risked their lives in roaming about in the Elk mountains that villages and towns can be seen in the distance on cliffs. Great natural bridges are also reported.

The evidence of erosion for centuries is everywhere present. The lower strata in this country is said to be sandstone, while the upper formation is a conglomerate deposit of evolutionary rocks. The soft sandstone has yielded most to erosion and the whole country is carved and sculptured.

Tradition of the Moquis.

An old tradition has been handed down for centuries among the Moqui tribe of Indians in Arizona. It was told to one explorer by an old chief through an interpreter. He said:

"Formerly the aborigines inhabited all this country as far west as the head waters of the San Juan, as far north as the Rio Dolores, west to the intersection of the Colorado and San Juan, and south throughout Arizona. They lived there from time immemorial and cultivated the valleys. Once they were visited by strangers from the north, supposed to be the ancestors of the present Utes, who fell upon them and devastated their farms. To save their lives they built houses upon the cliffs, where they could store their grain and defend themselves. These strangers worshipped the sun, and soon drove the inhabitants from their homes and across the cheerless uplands. For many moons they fought until the hollows in the rocks were filled with the mingled blood of conquerors and conquered. Victory was with the cliff dwellers and they beat their foes back out of the country. They moved gradually further south into the deserts of Arizona and there built new homes." The Moquis still occupy the haunts of their forefathers on almost unapproachable cliffs, where they are carefully preserving them.

May Find Mineral Resources.

It is into the wilds of that country that Mr. Culmer and Mr. Whitaker intend to go and put on record the wonders of this scenic stretch of land.

Manco, the McElmo, the Hovenweep and the Little Colorado.

The unexplored region lies northwest of Bluff City, and from here the party will launch out into the wastes and deserts of the Elk mountains. They have employed J. A. Scrup of Bluff City as a guide, with three or four other men somewhat acquainted with the country, to assist them in their expedition. These men are familiar with that section of the country said to contain natural curiosities and remarkable ruins. They have been heard from a distance some of these ruins, but most of this vast country is only known to them by rumors. The trail mapped out by the guides crosses the Butler Wash and up the Comb ridge. It follows the Comb valley to the headwaters of Comb creek near the Orejas Del Oro on the summit of the Elk mountains. Their base of supplies will be established in that neighborhood and they will work their way from that point into the country. They will endeavor to wend their way through that region until they reach the Cataract canyon of the Colorado river, and then extend their explorations further south. They expect to spend thirty days in their research for natural curiosities and mineral resources. If the rumors from this wonderful country prove to be true, and the natural resources are of any value, other parties will be sent on more extensive trips to probe the entire tract of land.

Some Mining Explorations.

Mining explorations were made some years ago into the region surrounding Monticello, south to the San Juan and over into Colorado. Several Salt Lake miners are still interested in mining property through that district, and among them are pioneers of that territory who went there in search of gold. At that

time but few white men had settled there, and the country was roamed over by Mexicans, and by Navajo, Mohave and Plute Indians.

Lewis S. Dickinson of Salt Lake City prospected through the southern part of Colorado and Utah a number of years ago and, besides staking out mining claims, he followed the half-broken trails through some of the roughest country, where but few explorers had been. Mr. Dickinson has a collection of pottery, tools, weapons and other materials which he found on his prospecting trips. He sold his mining property soon after he went there, but since that time he has made half a dozen trips into the valleys of the Little Colorado, across the Navajo Indian reservation, and along the tributaries of the San Juan river. He tells of the dangers of wandering into these mountains where no trails have been broken and where water is scarce away from the main streams. The Indians throughout that country, who have inhabited it for years, have landmarks that guide them to springs and pools, he says. Without guides, parties have been lost, and some of them have died from thirst, while numerous persons have been killed by slipping from cliffs into the ravines and gorges encountered in climbing about the country.

How Indians Procure Water.

Mr. Dickinson tells the following incident, which occurred on one of his trips:

"On one occasion a party of us were climbing through some rough country and we had been without water for some time. We traveled on, however, in hopes of finding a small pool or spring. We kept going, but no water was found. One or two in the party became so thirsty that it seemed necessary to reduce our steps and make for the main stream at the bottom of the canyon. Just as we were about to turn back a cowboy of Indians were seen coming up a narrow gulch below us. They got off their horses and I turned my field glasses on them. They sat down on the sand and commenced digging. In a short time they had a small hole dug, and it soon filled with water. They drank, let their ponies drink, and then filled up the hole and smoothed the sand. It was only a short distance from us, and we soon got to the gulch and opened up a hole, thereby saving the lives of some of the party."

In the valleys and canyons of the Rio Manco, the Rio McElmo, the Hovenweep and the Rio Chelly, branches of the San Juan river, are found the largest and most remarkable ruins in the United States. These rivers rise in Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico, but cross the boundary line of Utah before flowing into the San Juan river. For miles along the latter the ruins

of the cliff dwellers are found, and volumes have been written about them. The canyons have been described as a succession of benches, one above the other, for hundreds of feet in height, and connected by the steep slopes of the talus. All along these so-called benches are villages containing hundreds of rooms. Along the seams of the cave-like crevices, walls have been built up, enclosing them and the smaller apartments built up on the inside. Some are only accessible by hard climbing with fingers and toes inserted in the seams of the cliffs. Others are built on towering plateaus and are believed to have been used as fortifications. On the river bottoms great caves have been walled up and the structures are mostly underground.

Perfect Specimens of Masonry.

The masonry work on some of the ruins is perfect. The stones are cut to uniform size and perfectly smooth. Mortar is used in laying some of the structures and it is almost as hard as the rocks. As a general rule the ruins are square, but in the Hovenweep nearly all thus far found are round.

In these canyons are found burial places, and in some of them numerous mummies have been taken out. It appears to have been the custom of the people to bury all the possessions with the body. It is evident that great care was taken of the dead, and their bodies were quite surrounded with pottery, war clubs and matting, over which were stone slabs covered with charcoal and burnt corn.

Pottery has not only been found in the graves, but it is strewn all over the country and about the ruins. Various kinds have been picked up in a rough grey resembling wicker ware. The colored ware is found both in figured and smooth pieces. The decorating of some of the pottery must have been done with great care. The ornaments stand out from the background in different colors, though generally painted in red ochre. Hieroglyphics are carved all over the cliffs and some of them are three and four hundred feet above the river bottom. Many of them are pictures of animals and birds.

Besides the discoveries which have been made in the country surrounding this vast unknown region, even greater ruins are expected to be found by Mr. Culmer and Mr. Whitaker on their expedition.

In Demand.

(Chicago News.)

The young playwright boldly entered the private office of the New York theatrical manager.

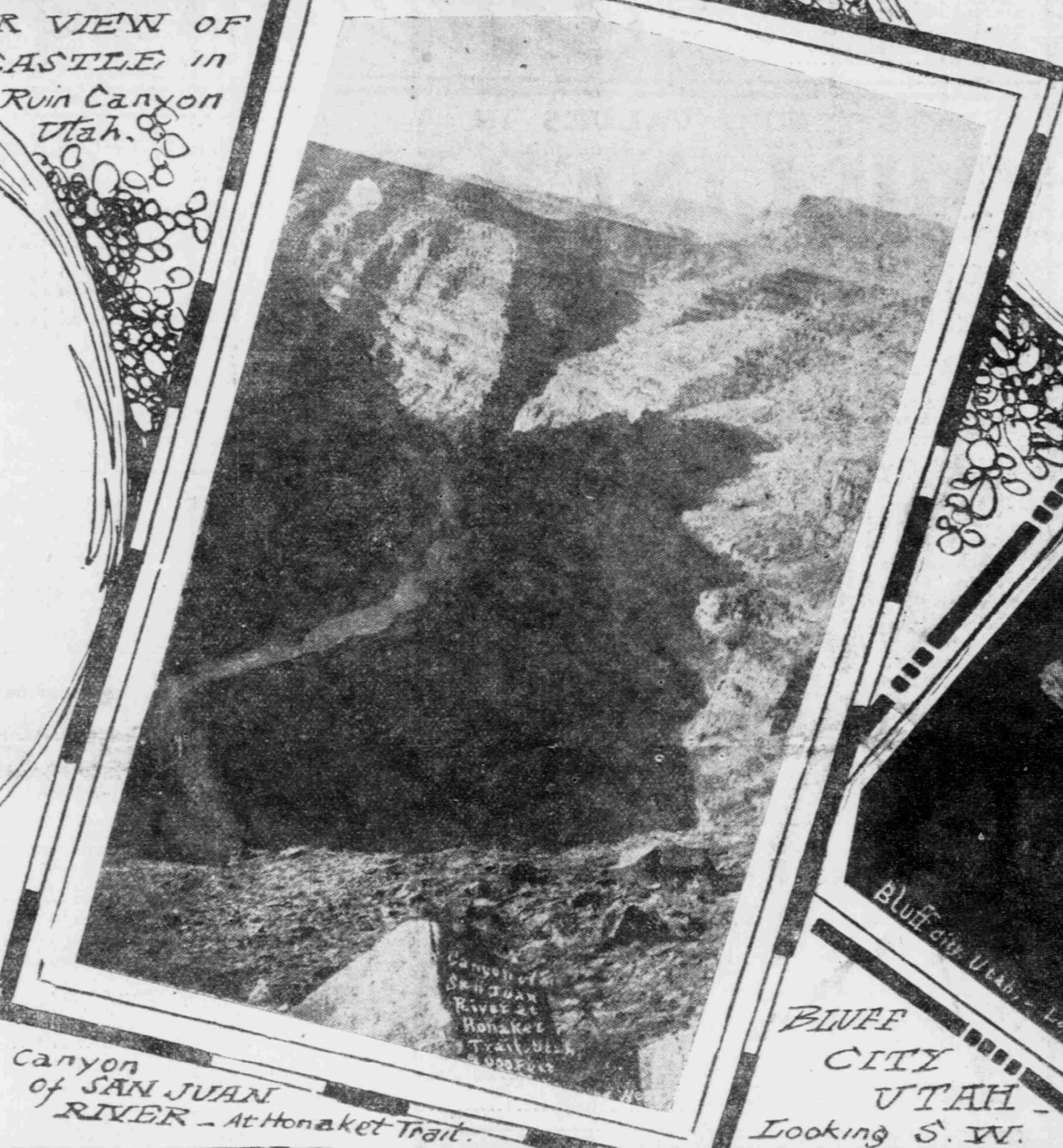
"I have a play," he announced. The theatrical manager adjusted his glasses.

"Is it exciting?" Modern playgoers demand real moos, explosions and nose-actors."

The playwright smiled. "It could not be more exciting. In the last act there is a real automobile explosion that blows the stage away, and the next moment—Hoo-kee, the curtain, 4-man-actor, rushes among the audience with a ten-foot bludgeon."

The theatrical manager was all circumspect.

"Good?" he exclaimed. "We'll play to packed houses every night. Name your price?"



CANYON OF SAN JUAN RIVER - At Honaket Trail.

BLUFF CITY UTAH - Looking S. W.



RUINS OF 16 ROOM CAVE-CLIFF HOUSE

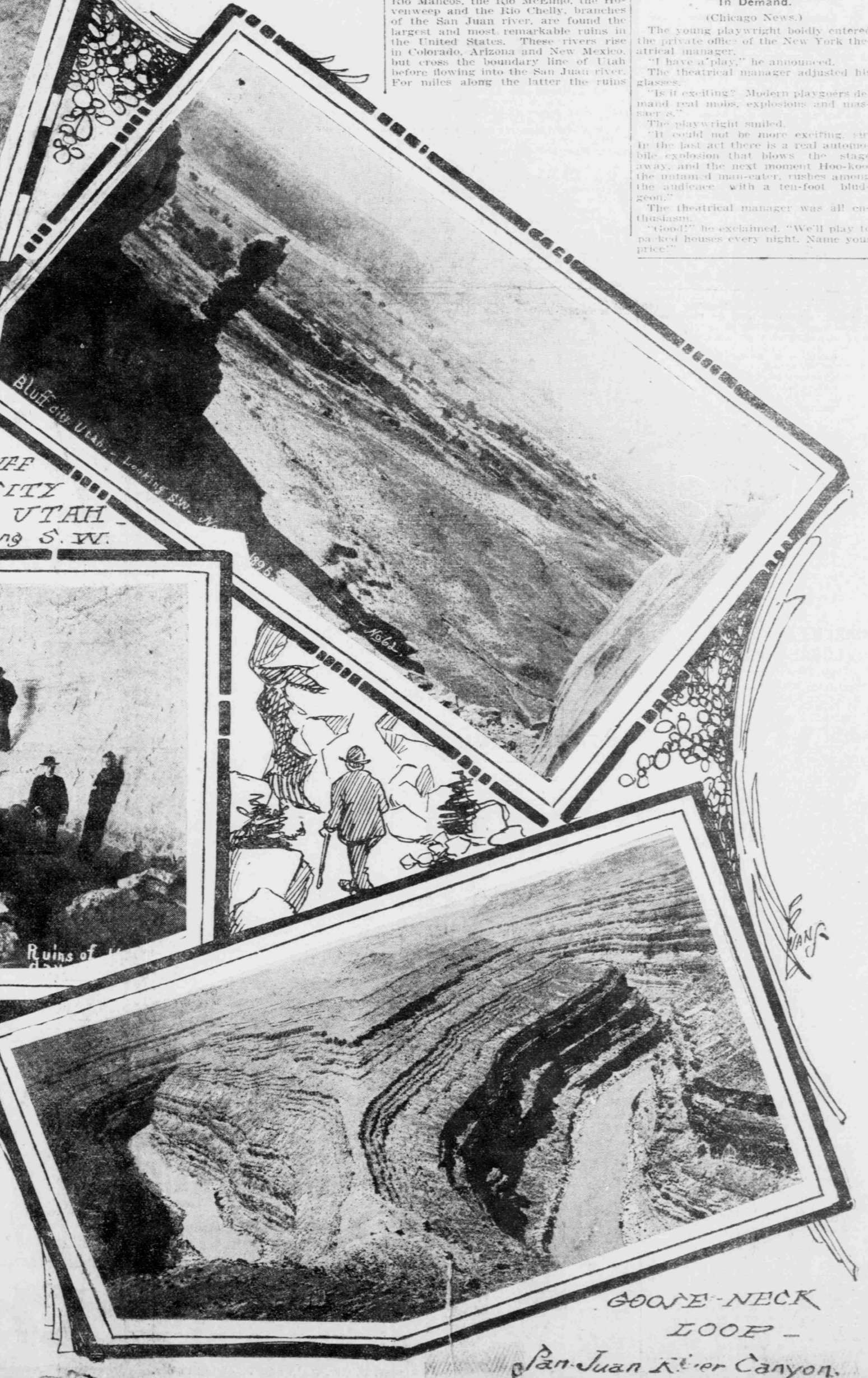
Their researches will not only deal with the cliff dwellers, but also with the mineral resources supposed to be there. Mr. Culmer will make paintings and Mr. Whitaker will take with him the complete equipment of a photographer so as to bring back illustrations as well as data. They do not intend to go into this region as vandals to destroy what they find, but rather to preserve and unearth the mysteries of the region. The Commercial club is not only interested in opening up the treasures of the country, but it believes the entire tract of land should be set aside as a national park.

The discoveries already made in the southern part of the state are extensive, and some of the pottery, feather-cloth and matting unearthed in the cliff dwellings are among the best specimens ever found. In the burial places of the aborigines mummies have been dug up in large numbers, and some of them can be seen in the Desert Museum at the University of Utah. The evidences of mound builders extend as far north as Utah Lake and a chain of ruins can be traced clear into the region of the San Juan. It is along this

line that Mr. Culmer and Mr. Whitaker will proceed after leaving the railroad at Thompson's Springs. From Moab they will go to Monticello. Here the trail crosses the head of Devil's canyon and then follows down the Hallett's canyon to Bluff City, situated in a valley surrounded by table lands, once the old river bed of the San Juan river.

May Be Seen From Bluff City.

This valley is filled with ruins, and with the naked eye a sixteen-room cliff-house can be seen from the center of the city. Farther down the valley the ruins of watch towers are found, and mounds have been opened up containing mummies and relics. The homes of the residents of Bluff City are decorated with valuable implements made of flint, war clubs, large water jugs carved and figured and various kinds of rush matting. The whole valley bears evidence that it was once cultivated by the lowland villagers and cave-dwellers. Within a radius of a few miles from Bluff City are to be found the most remarkable ruins in the valleys and canyons of the San Juan, the Rio



GOOSE-NECK

LOOP -

San Juan River Canyon.